

T R A N S I T I O N

No Regrets And Hardly Any Tears:

Betty Linton Stirs New Missionaries With Korea Retirement Report



On February 12, 1992 John Kyle, Mission to the World Coordinator, recognized Betty Linton for her ministry among Korean tuberculosis patients through the last three decades. Betty retired earlier this year after leaving for Korea in 1951 with her husband Hugh Linton. Hugh's parents, as well as his grandparents, were missionaries in Korea and he and Betty had a great burden for this land. This burden, along with an unique vision for a Presbyterian Church within walking distance of every Korean, made Hugh an internationally recognized force behind much of the present church planting success in Korea today. When Hugh died in a tragic accident in 1984, Betty continued the work she began at Soonchun. Betty gave the following report to MTW committee members, staff and newly appointed missionaries.

I went to Korea with the idea that I was going to do all these great things. I had this visual image of a Bible under my arm, of going out into the country and all the rest of it. But the first five or six years I did exactly what any mother of six children would do. I separated their fights. I washed their little faces. It was the same thing that you do over here. And actually I became rather discouraged.

But after our youngest was happier to play outside than to stay and hang on my skirt, I had to do something. The Christian hospital in Kwong Ju, which was 65 miles away, asked me if I would do a home visitation program. A lot of their patients came from our area (most of them had tuberculosis) and they could not admit them all. They would treat

them with drugs, give them medicine to take home and say, "Come back for more medicine."

Some of them, almost all of them, were never heard from again. They asked me to find these people and to find out why they had not come back. I went out with this questionnaire from village to village. I walked on little paths between rice patties and I would look for our patients. And something happened. Something came to light that I knew nothing of.

People would come from the fields where they were working and they would say, "Come, go home with me, my child is sick." "My child has a big hump on her back, I don't know why she can't walk." "My grandmother just fell unconscious two days ago." They would beg you

to come with them. Well, I tried to explain, I'm not a nurse, and I'm not a doctor and all I have is this little form to fill out. But I was from the hospital and they wouldn't let me off the hook very easily.

We found, at that time in Korea, that there were many, many people in need of medical attention. And the reason they had not gone back to Kwong Ju — patients on the list as well as others who had never been treated — was the lack of the money for a bus ticket. This was a real shock to me. The first list the hospital gave me had 100 names and I thought, "My, this is a lot!" Then they said, "When you finish that list we have another one ready for you." It really was a heart rending thing. I can tell you it was very hard to sleep at night.

That experience began our Soonchun clinic. Immediately we had 700 patients who had tuberculosis. So, we became professional beggars. We went to every organization in Seoul. I don't care if it was the America Career Foundation — whatever it was that had anything to give away, we asked for it. And we got help!

As we began to learn more about how we could help these patients and as hospital doctors came on a regular basis, we began to improve the clinic. First it was in my own guest room. Then we moved into a Korean house and later on into a bigger building. Now we have a rehabilitation home where we take patients in, put them on medication and help them get well again.

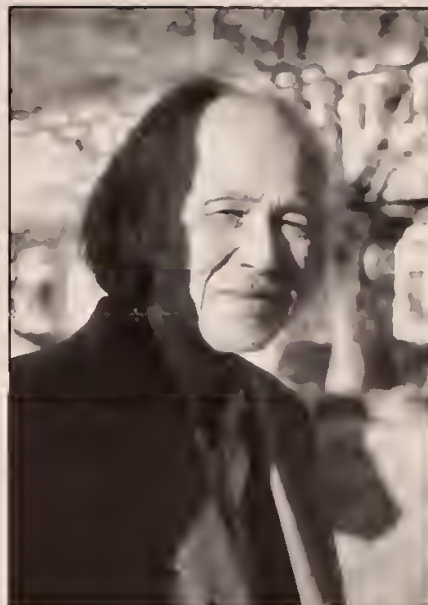
Soon after we started our clinic, we found another problem. Some patients came to us too late. Some were children from orphanages. No one had noticed they were really sick until they got very, very sick. Others were refugees from North Korea without families to care for them. Many were incurable. We always gave them medicine but somehow or another we found ourself with a number of chronic patients who would never get well.

We started a chronic care facility. Today it is a place where people who are chronically ill can die with dignity. We have cottages set up in a village system. We have room for about 32 people. Jimmy Lyons (a MTW representative) came out to visit us and he raised money to improve that facility, and we are very grateful. Later as we came under MTW directly, they allowed us to have \$100,000 to renovate our old clinic building.

Well, what's going to happen now? Some years ago we put ourselves under a Korean board of directors. They are a fine group of men. We have doctors, we have a minister and we have some ruling elders from local

churches. We have a very, very good staff. A fine Christian staff that I have a lot of faith in. When the Ministry of Health finally gets a hold on tuberculosis in Korea we may move into other things, maybe care for children with cerebral palsy — we have none of that — or maybe care for the elderly. The board is cognizant of these problems but for right now tuberculosis is still there and our present work is filling a very, very real need.

We have one more project for the future that I have to tell you about. We need an emergency service ambulance between our area and Kwong Ju hospital which is about an hour away. Our doctors tell me that we would never have had the Olympics in Korea if the



A tuberculosis patient

Olympic Committee had known that ambulances in Korea are only transport — they aren't equipped with emergency service.

We are all hoping and praying that we can set up a program so that we can train technicians and so that we can put an ambulance in our area that will have the equipment to keep people alive until they get to the hospital. This is very near to my heart because after Hugh had his accident he was put into the back of a taxi and died en route to the hospital.

I've talked to the director of a hospital in Kwong Ju and we have to have government recognition for a program to train these people. We can train our own staff, but nevertheless, we'd like it to spread further than just for us, so we're working on that right now. And we'd ask you to pray for that. And thank you, all of you staff members who have worked on this ambulance project.

This has just been the nicest thing to come home to — knowing that there's hope — knowing that we're going to have an ambulance in the near future. Thank you so much, all of you, for all you have done, and for those of you who are just going out. I don't think you'll ever be sorry. I'm not!



A doctor at the Soonchun clinic tests patients.

Moving Blues

Susan and Bruce Young live in Nagoya, Japan where Bruce is the leader of our MTW church-planting team. Bruce grew up in Japan and is a third generation missionary to that country. Susan wrote this article about ten years ago and found it while — what else — getting ready to move!

We were in our second term as missionaries to Japan with two years down and two years to go. Life was fairly settled and we were enjoying our work. Then someone reminded us we needed to think about going home.

Don't misunderstand me. I like Japan and I like America. I enjoy living in either — once I'm living there! It's the "going" I hate.

For us, "going" meant finding someone to live in our house for a year or packing, moving and storing all our worldly possessions until we returned. It didn't seem long before we were in the process of having rugs and curtains cleaned and wrapped for moth-proof storage. Linens were tightly bagged with desiccant to prevent mildew during the rainy season.

Tears, over toys that had to be left at "home" in Japan, were dried and hurts soothed. We wondered whether or not we could fit those diapers into the suitcase or afford pampers until we got home and bought more diapers (hey, this could get expensive!).

The whole issue of stateside itself was a big question mark. If you can find a furnished home for missionaries as the missionary manual advises, you're set. But we wanted to be near my parents where there were no such homes. So, we were on our own (as the manual clearly states) trying to find a place to live from halfway around the world.

One Friday afternoon, as our departure date was drawing near, I was on my way home from a Women's Bible Study. As I juggled Baby John on one hip and transferred the diaper bag and my Bible to unlock our door, I heard the phone ring. After all, where's the fun in motherhood, if it isn't juggling babies, diapers, and miscellaneous etc. while trying to rush to somewhere, beyond a locked something, for which we can find every key but the one that works.

I finally opened the door, deposited my juggling props on the middle of the floor, breathlessly reached the phone, and fairly shouted between large gulps of desperately needed air, "Moshi, MOSHI!" "Hello, HELLO!"

It was my mother. What a wonderful surprise! She had found the perfect apartment at the perfect price. While waiting to tell Bruce the happy news, I picked up my Bible, diapers, baby, etc. and started to read Numbers 33.

This passage is a chronological record of the stages of Israel's journey from Egypt to Canaan. I had gotten through four encampments and eight verses when Bruce arrived home.

After a short discussion we decided to rent the apartment and made an expensive phone call that would secure our "home-away-from-home" for furlough. God had other plans. When our prospective landlord found out that we had three children, the answer was simply, "No!"

After subsequent phone calls we found that most landlords with apartments in this area didn't want to rent to families with three or more children. I went back to Numbers feeling pretty sorry for myself and more than a little like a yo-yo in God's hands. Then I started to count. I suppose, theological discussions aside, that's what "Numbers" is all about anyway. Forty-one moves later, Aaron the priest went up to Mt. Hor at the command of the Lord and died there! Rolling with laughter, I wondered if that was what the Lord had in store for me.

My friends admit I'm a little weird, so I will too. But, folks, this is not weird. I mean 41 moves from Egypt to Canaan. Is my math wrong or does that work out to a little more than a move a year for forty years?

Talk about transients! Can you imagine the phone bill Moses would have had to pay if all those families could have called Canaan to haggle over security deposits? Or funnier yet, at the end of the chapter, you will remember that God commands the Israelites to drive the inhabitants from the land before them as they enter. I could just see all the residents of St. Louis clutching their leases and mortgages in their hands, trembling with fright, as we arrived on American Airlines, flight 102.

On reflection I realized that God was teaching me — just as He was teaching the Israelites in the wilderness. I needed to have a faith that would not waver no matter what the circumstances. God is sufficient in supplying our needs AS WE NEED and not before.

As we sat down to supper that evening I told the children that after we finished eating we should spend some time praying for a house in America. Brian, four years old at the time, piped up with, "I'm going to

pray for a house with a swimming pool."

I didn't dare tell the family that my New Testament reading that day had been in Mark 11.

"Therefore I tell you, whatever you ask in prayer, believe that you have received it, and it will be yours."

Well, it had been a little dry in the desert. What with lugging all those babies, and pampers and suitcases around — a little swim in the Jordan wouldn't be so bad after all.



"Yes, a 12 bedroom is a must . . . the gameroom, den & jacuzzi sound great . . . is this a bad connection? Hello, hello. . . I didn't quite get that last part. — No, the 25th! Our people will be invading your section of Canaan on the 25th! If your family could flee on or before the 24th it would be most convenient."